

News

United States
Department
of Labor



Bureau of Labor Statistics

Boston, MA 02203

Internet address: <http://www.bls.gov/ro1/home.htm#news>

USDL-02-217

For information: 617 565-2327

Transmission of materials in this release
embargoed until 8:30 AM, Friday,
October 18, 2002

Media information: 617 565-2331

Fax-on-demand number: 617 565-9167

Fax code: 9110

BOSTON AREA CONSUMER PRICES ROSE 1.7 PERCENT IN SEPTEMBER; UP 3.3 PERCENT OVER THE YEAR

The Consumer Price Index For All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the Boston metropolitan area rose 1.7 percent for the two months ended September 2002, according to Denis M. McSweeney, Regional Commissioner of the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. This follows a 0.5 percent increase during the previous two-month period ended in July 2002. The all items index rose largely due to an increase in housing and to a lesser extent higher costs for apparel, other goods and services, and education and communication. For the year ended September 2002, the CPI-U for Boston rose 3.3 percent and core inflation, as measured by the all items less food and energy index, was up 4.7 percent.

For the two months ended September 2002, housing increased 1.7 percent largely resulting from higher costs within shelter while fuels and utilities remained essentially unchanged. Apparel rose 9.0 percent due to the introduction of fall clothing lines. Higher cigarette prices led to a 6.9 percent increase in the other goods and services category. Education and communication rose 3.7 percent, largely due to increases in tuition, other school fees, and childcare. Among the remaining major expenditure categories, food and beverages rose 0.7 percent and medical care edged up 0.1 percent. Conversely, recreation and transportation each edged down 0.1 percent.

For the year ended September 2002, the Boston CPI-U rose 3.3 percent largely due to an increase in the housing index. Housing rose 5.3 percent as an 8.4 percent rise in shelter more than offset a 24.5 percent decline in utility natural gas and a 17.7 percent drop in electricity. Among the remaining categories over the year, other goods and services increased 7.9 percent, largely due to the higher cost of cigarettes. Medical care rose 4.4 percent and food and beverages was up 1.3 percent. Education and communication increased 2.0 percent and recreation rose 1.5 percent. Moderating these increases, transportation declined 0.6 percent due to a drop in public transportation and apparel edged down 0.3 percent.

In September, the Boston CPI-U on the 1982-84 base was 199.1. By this gauge, the selected market basket of goods and services which cost area consumers an average of \$10.00 during the 1982-84 reference period would now cost almost double at \$19.91. The purchasing power of the dollar for the Boston area in 1982-84 dollars was 50.2 cents. In September, the CPI-W (Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers), at 197.7, was up 1.9 percent since July 2002 and increased 3.0 percent over the year.

New free email subscription service! To receive the most recent monthly Consumer Price Indexes for the U.S. and Northeast, and bimonthly indexes for the Boston-Brockton-Nashua, MA-NH-ME-CT metropolitan area, please subscribe at <http://www.bls.gov/bls/list.htm> and select the notification titled New England CPI Summary (Boston). Boston Consumer Price Index for November will be released on Tuesday, December 17, 2002 at 8:30 AM.

Note: The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has updated the consumption expenditure weights in the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U) and in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) to the 1999-2000 period, effective with release of data for January 2002. The newer weights replace the 1993-95 weights, which were first used in the index effective with January 1998 data. Additionally, CPI expenditure weights will be updated at two-year intervals subsequent to the 2002 updating. Thus, for example, CPI expenditure weights will be updated to the 2001-02 period effective with release of CPI data for January 2004. Historically, the introduction of a comprehensive new set of expenditure weights attached to the categories of goods and services in the CPI "market basket" has taken place in the context of the periodic major revisions of the index. Such major revisions have taken place approximately once each decade-in 1940, 1953, 1964, 1978, 1987, and 1998. The goal in employing more current expenditure weights is to have the CPI reflect, as much as possible, the inflation currently experienced by consumers. More specifically, the use of more current weights will help to ensure that the relative importance of CPI item categories, such as food away from home, college tuition, or medical care services, more accurately reflects how consumers are allocating their spending. Additional information is available on the BLS Internet Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cpi/cpiupdt.htm> or by call 617-565-2327.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods Boston-Brockton-Nashua, MA-NH-ME-CT (1982=84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	July 2002	Aug. 2002	Sep. 2002	Sep. 2001	July 2002	Aug. 2002
Expenditure category						
All items	195.7	-	199.1	3.3	1.7	-
All items (1967=100)	568.9	-	578.6	-	-	-
Food and beverages	183.9	-	185.2	1.3	.7	-
Food	184.4	-	186.0	1.1	.9	-
Food at home	177.1	179.4	178.3	1.2	.7	-0.6
Food away from home	197.1	-	199.1	1.0	1.0	-
Alcoholic beverages	180.6	-	179.7	3.3	-5	-
Housing	199.8	-	203.2	5.3	1.7	-
Shelter	241.8	245.1	246.5	8.4	1.9	.6
Rent of primary residence (1).....	234.7	236.1	238.8	7.4	1.7	1.1
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (1) (2)	250.2	252.1	255.7	9.1	2.2	1.4
Fuels and utilities	130.0	-	130.3	-13.9	.2	-
Fuels	110.5	110.5	110.8	-16.1	.3	.3
Gas (piped) and electricity (1).....	128.7	128.7	128.7	-19.3	.0	.0
Electricity (1).....	135.3	135.3	135.3	-17.7	.0	.0
Utility natural gas service (1).....	113.0	113.0	113.0	-24.5	.0	.0
Household furnishings and operations	122.3	-	122.7	-2.5	.3	-
Apparel	130.8	-	142.6	-.3	9.0	-
Transportation	150.3	-	150.2	-.6	-.1	-
Private transportation	149.0	-	148.9	.1	-.1	-
Motor fuel	119.5	123.1	123.2	.0	3.1	.1
Gasoline (all types)	117.8	121.5	121.5	-.1	3.1	.0
Gasoline, unleaded regular (3).....	116.0	119.5	119.3	.2	2.8	-.2
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade (3) (4)....	120.3	124.4	124.6	.1	3.6	.2
Gasoline, unleaded premium (3).....	118.8	121.9	122.3	-.8	2.9	.3
Medical care	385.0	-	385.4	4.4	.1	-
Recreation (5).....	106.8	-	106.7	1.5	-.1	-
Education and communication (5).....	106.2	-	110.1	2.0	3.7	-
Other goods and services	294.0	-	314.3	7.9	6.9	-
Commodity and service group						
All items	195.7	-	199.1	3.3	1.7	-
Commodities	148.7	-	151.5	-.2	1.9	-
Commodities less food and beverages	129.4	-	132.9	-1.0	2.7	-
Nondurables less food and beverages	139.9	-	147.5	1.0	5.4	-
Durables	119.4	-	118.6	-2.9	-.7	-
Services	238.5	-	242.3	5.2	1.6	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	187.4	-	190.8	3.2	1.8	-
All items less shelter	178.4	-	181.2	.2	1.6	-
Commodities less food	131.5	-	134.9	-.8	2.6	-
Nondurables	160.7	-	165.3	1.0	2.9	-
Nondurables less food	142.1	-	149.1	1.2	4.9	-
Services less rent of shelter (2)	240.8	-	243.2	.5	1.0	-
Services less medical care services	226.5	-	230.3	5.2	1.7	-
Energy	114.5	116.0	116.2	-9.4	1.5	0.2
All items less energy	207.4	-	211.0	4.2	1.7	-
All items less food and energy	212.5	-	216.5	4.7	1.9	-

1 This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series converted to a geometric means estimator in January, 1999.

2 Index is on a November 1982=100 base.

3 Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

4 Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

5 Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

- Data not available.

NOTE: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.